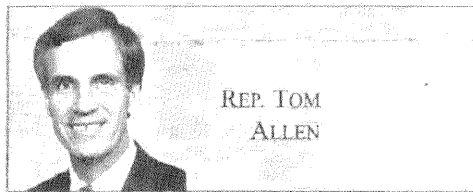


# Bush budget gets no rubber-stamp this year

FROM THE HOUSE



REP. TOM ALLEN

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**A**s a senior member of the House Budget Committee, my chief concerns are keeping our nation's defenses strong and our homeland secure and supporting America's middle class- the workers, families and businesses whose efforts fuel our economy and prosperity. For the past seven years, the Bush Administration's economic policies and budget decisions have benefited the multinational corporations like Exxon, Halliburton and Bechtel, not the small businesses that are the backbone of Maine's economy. The President's policies consistently favor Wall Street not Main Street. The recent budget for Fiscal Year 2009 that President Bush presented to Congress demonstrates this once again. His priorities and the priorities of his supporters in Congress are not my priorities or the priorities Maine people describe to me when I visit their businesses, meet with them in their communities and talk to them on the street.

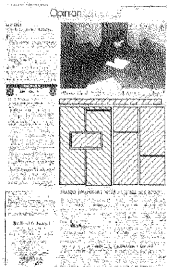
I supported the economic stimulus package that House Democratic and Republican leaders negotiated with the President because it will put money in the pockets of middle-income individuals and families. Recent jobs reports and other benchmarks suggest that our nation's economy is

approaching if not already in recession. I am pleased that the Senate set aside partisan differences to follow the House's lead and pass this much need legislation and send it to the President.

Unfortunately, the President's proposed budget would undo much of what this economic stimulus package will accomplish because it drastically curtails support for health care, education, research and other programs important to families and small businesses.

The President's budget reduces spending on Medicare and Medicaid by \$196 billion over the next five years, adding to the budget woes that currently confront Maine and almost every state. It requests less than half the funds promised to states and local school districts to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act, shifting the burden to local property taxpayers. Last year, with my strong support, Congress passed the largest increase in funding for veterans' health care in history. This year, the President proposes more than \$20 billion in cuts to veterans' health care and additional reductions for constructing, renovating, and rehabilitating health care facilities. He has also proposed to increase co-payments and fees on 1.4 million veterans by more than \$5.2 billion over the next ten years.

Even though unemployment is rising, the President's budget slashes employment and training services across the country by \$150 million, including \$514,000 for Maine's very successful One-Stop Career Centers and \$722,000 from Maine programs that assist work-



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ers who have lost their jobs due to trade or industry-wide layoffs. The President even proposes to cut the successful Job Corps program by \$35 million.

While temperatures plunge and fuel costs soar, the President proposes \$4.123 million less in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds for Mainers to pay their heating oil bills. The President's budget also eliminates the Department of Energy's Weatherization Program, which helps low income people and senior citizens make their homes more energy efficient.

Many of the President's budget priorities are shortsighted for Maine and America's future economic prosperity.

For example, under the President's plan, Maine would lose \$722,000 in Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program funds, at a loss of an estimated 356 jobs and nearly \$15 million in private investments. I have visited scores of small businesses across Maine that have used MEP funds to invest in start up or expansion, creating thousands of good jobs.

Some of the President's national defense and homeland security priorities are also wrong for Maine and America. At a time when our spending on Navy shipbuilding should increase, the President would cut it by \$13.5 billion in 2009, threatening Navy readiness and Maine's shipbuilding industry. While security experts continue to warn that Maine and the nation's ports remain at risk from potential terrorist attack, the President has requested only half of what Congress authorized for cargo screening and other critically important precautionary measures. The President proposes elimination of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program; Maine would lose \$6.3 million Maine for fire and other emergency responders.

I guarantee that Congress will

not rubber-stamp the President's budget priorities this year. The people of Maine and America have new, more important and more effective priorities.

I am committed to work with Democrats and Republicans on the House Budget Committee to produce a budget that will strengthen our nation's defenses, make our homeland more secure and our communities safer and support the people, families and small businesses that drive America's economy and keep us competitive in the global marketplace.

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